

Beaky



Jez Alborough



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Summary: An egg tumbles to the forest floor and hatches, but its offspring doesn't know
what kind of animal it is until a frog helps it on a quest for identity.

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Weekly Reader
Children's Book Club Presents

Beaky



Written and illustrated by
Jez Alborough



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An egg tumbled down through the leaves and branches and shattered into pieces on the rain forest floor.



Out popped a fluffy creature
with a bright blue beak
and a curly orange tail.



"Hello," croaked Frog, jumping out from behind a bush.

"I'm a frog, what are you?"

The creature looked confused.

"Don't you know what you are?" asked Frog.

The creature shook its head.

"Then you can be my friend," said Frog.

"I will call you Beaky. Come on, let's go for a walk."





"Am I a frog?" asked Beaky as they hopped along. Frog laughed. "If you were a frog," he said, "then you would be able to hop as high as me and you wouldn't have those funny fluffy flaps."



"If I'm not a frog," said Beaky, "then what am I?" "I don't know," puzzled Frog, "I've never seen anything like you before; but you must be something . . . everything is something!"

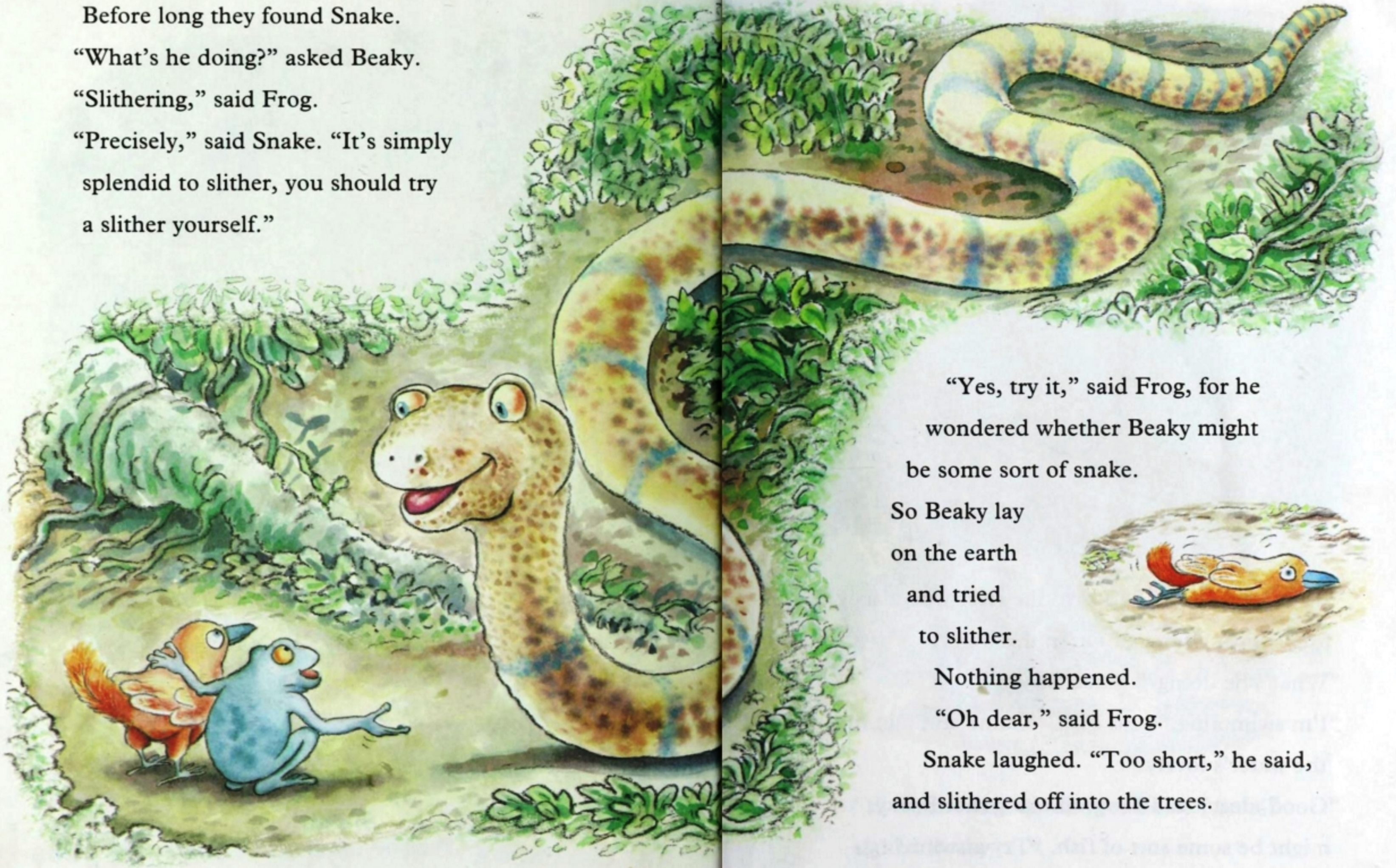


Before long they found Snake.

"What's he doing?" asked Beaky.

"Slithering," said Frog.

"Precisely," said Snake. "It's simply splendid to slither, you should try a slither yourself."



"Yes, try it," said Frog, for he wondered whether Beaky might be some sort of snake.

So Beaky lay on the earth and tried to slither.



Nothing happened.

"Oh dear," said Frog.

Snake laughed. "Too short," he said, and slithered off into the trees.



Beaky and Frog hopped to the river where they found Fish gliding about in the water.

"What's he doing?" asked Beaky.

"I'm swimming," said Fish. "Come and join me, the water's lovely."

"Good idea," said Frog, thinking that Beaky might be some sort of fish. "Try a swim."



Beaky splished and splashed and flipped and flapped, but couldn't swim a stroke.

"Oh dear," said Frog.

Fish giggled. "Too fluffy," he said, and swam away.



"Everyone knows what he is except me," sighed Beaky.

Just then he heard something singing softly, far away.



"Did you hear that?" he asked excitedly.

"Hear what?" said Frog.

"Listen!" said Beaky. "It came from up there."



Frog looked up to the top of the trees, then he heard it too.

"Someone up there must be really happy," said Beaky, "to sing such a joyful song. Do you think I could ever be that happy?"

"Maybe," said Frog, "but not until we discover what you are."

Then he had an idea. "Let's climb up there," he said, "and see if we can find out."



So up they went, but the higher they climbed



the more frightened Frog became.



So Beaky had to go on alone.

On and on he struggled, all through the day and
into the night until he could go no further.



“Now I’m lost,” cried Beaky, “and I still haven’t found out what I am. Maybe I should never have left the forest floor. Perhaps the song was just a dream.” And with this thought, he slept.

"What are you?" called Beaky.

"I'm a bird," sang the creature, "a bird of Paradise."

"A bird," said Beaky, "that's what I am."



Beaky awoke the next morning to the sound of a familiar song.

Looking around, he saw circling in the air a beautiful fluffy creature with a bright blue beak and a curly orange tail.





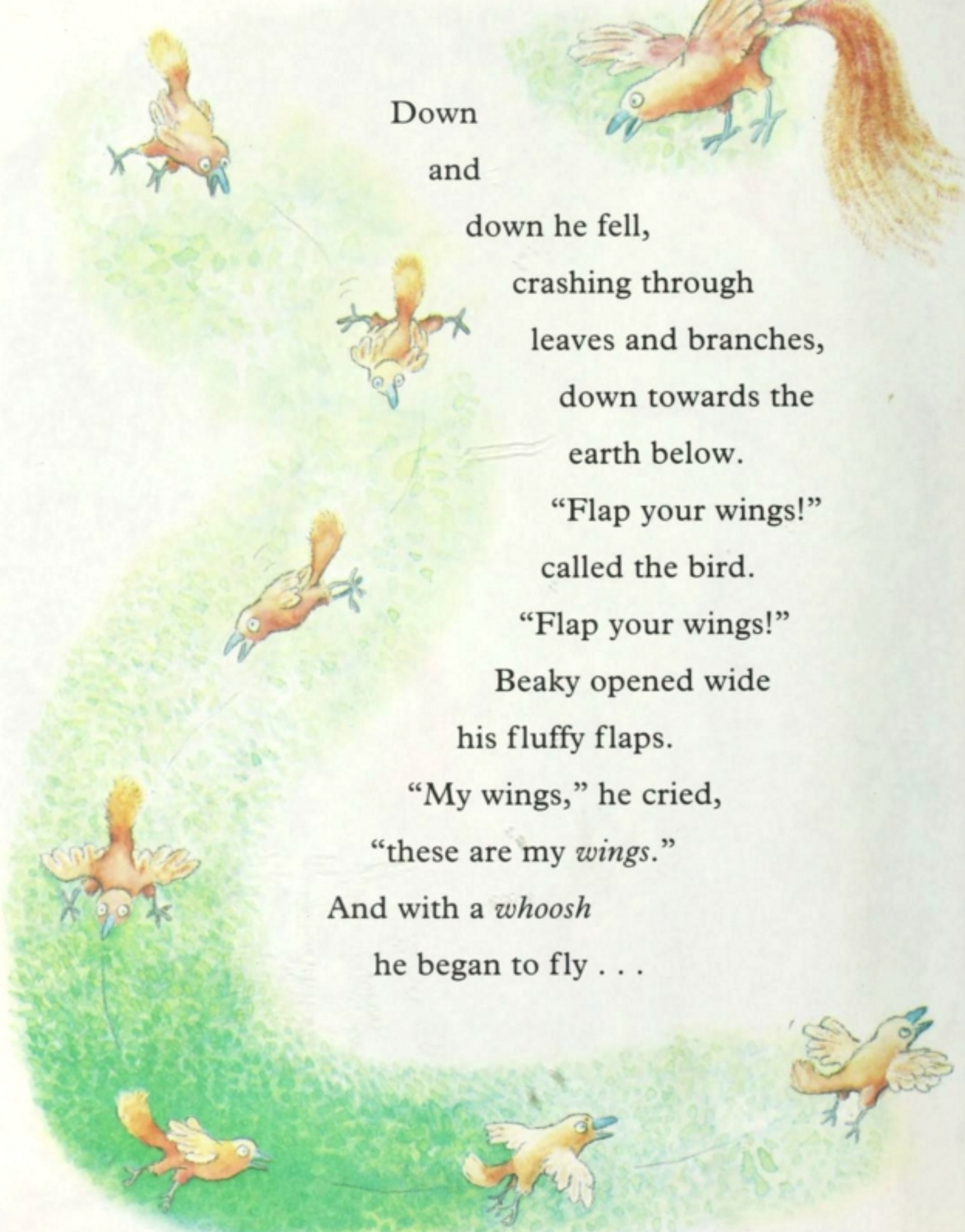
In his excitement he jumped and skipped and dipped,



he strutted, bobbed and trotted and then . . .



he tripped!



Down
and

down he fell,
crashing through
leaves and branches,
down towards the
earth below.

“Flap your wings!”
called the bird.

“Flap your wings!”
Beaky opened wide
his fluffy flaps.

“My wings,” he cried,
“these are my *wings*.”
And with a *whoosh*
he began to fly . . .



up past a tree where Snake was slithering . . .



down to the river where Fish was swimming . . .

and back to the vine where Frog was still waiting.

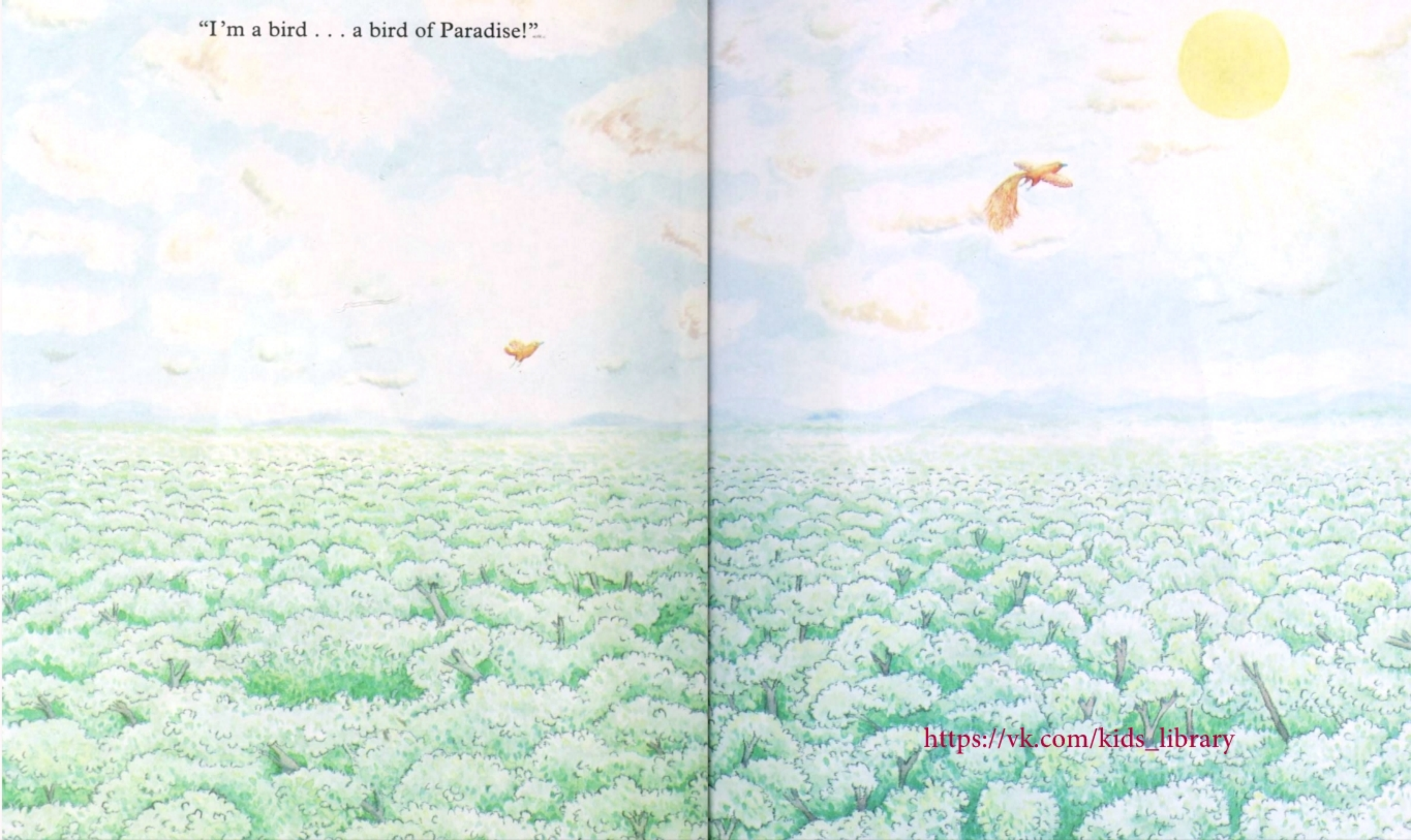


“Frog,” said Beaky, “look at me. I can’t slither, or swim, or hop like you, but I can *fly*!”
At that moment Beaky heard the singing once more and it seemed to be calling him.
“I must go,” he said, “but I’ll come back and visit.”



Then he flew up towards the treetops.
“Beaky,” called Frog, “you haven’t told me what you are.”
“I’m a bird,” cried Beaky.

“I’m a bird . . . a bird of Paradise!”





An egg tumbled down through
the leaves and branches and
shattered into pieces on the rain forest floor.

Out popped Beaky, uncertain what
sort of creature he was,
but determined to find out.



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